

things that we *can* do. "Man is born unto trouble" has been the testimony for all ages, and each person has his own troubles, but when we study this subject right we will find that man is largely the cause of his own troubles, especially by bringing sin, misery, and suffering into the world by "intoxicating liquors."

Lakeville, Ind.

#### FEET WASHING

JOSEPH PARKER

The incident recorded in this chapter is made the more beautiful by certain features of surpassing grandeur which are found in immediate connection with it. There seems, indeed, at first an inequality between the majesty of the mountain and the value of the frail flower which blooms on its sunny height. We are startled by the difference between the introduction and the progress of the narrative. It is as if God had called attention by great thunderings, and when he had excited the expectation of the universe, introduced, not a burning seraph—who might have maintained the high tone of the introduction—but a quiet little child, a miniature of his own gentleness and purity. This is the introduction, hear it, and say whether the representation now given be correct. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God." At this point wonder is excited. We inquire what will he do now, at this critical trying juncture of his life? Jesus knows the fulness of the mystery set forth in his incarnation; he sees God behind him sending him into the world—sees God before him welcoming him after the completion of his earthly ministry. What will he do now? Jesus has come within sight of the end; all the fragments of his life are gathering themselves together and taking wondrous shape, as he beheld them coming into union and forming themselves into their hidden meanings,—what will he do now? We wait almost breathlessly for the sentence. Let us read it as our imagination might dictate it. Jesus knowing the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God, unfolded secret wings and went up into light; unveiled splendors which had been concealed under the guise of his flesh; called angels—host upon host, a dazzling throng—to bring the crown he had left in heaven. This is our notion of greatness, of pomp, of circumstance. What will Christ do now in this supreme consciousness, in this hour of the resurrection before the time. Now he will take wing and flee away. He knows now who he is, what God's meaning in his incarnation and whole ministry is; he sees the human standpoint, the beginning and the end; he lays his hands, so to say, on both ends of the chain. What will he do in the moment of supreme consciousness? He will show his diadem now; with his right hand he will take away the cloud which veiled it, and the shining of that diadem shall put out the sun. What will he do in this

summer time? We have analogous times in our own consciousness, when we feel what we are, when the divinity stirs within us, when we feel the blood of a hundred kings burning in our veins. What is our wish under the pressure of such heroic consciousness? Surely to do some great thing; surely to vindicate our right to be called by brilliant names. What did Jesus Christ do? Mark the time—"Jesus knowing"—that his right hand was full and his left hand-yea, that the Father "had given all things into his hands,"—what did he do? He does not any of the supposed wonderful things which he might have done, but, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, he arose from supper, laid aside his garments, he took a garment and girded himself, he poured water into a basin, "and began to wash the disciples' feet." Who but himself could have afforded such an apparent anti climax. What man can afford in one moment to affect sublimity and grandeur and majesty, and in the next ask to wash your feet? It seems as if Jesus Christ might have washed the disciples' in the midst of his most obvious humiliation. He need not have reserved that display of his humility for the supreme moment of consciousness, when God's eternity was round about him, beating in waves of immortal blessedness upon the earthliest and poorest aspects of his mission. Yet it was then, when the whole thing, in all the brightness of its glory, showed itself to his inmost heart, that he stooped to wash the feet of the men who had followed him! We cannot know the meaning of condescension in the divine economy; we do not see that God is always stooping; that the Infinite is always doing this very self same thing, and that suspension of such service would mean the utter ruin of all finite things. This is what God is doing: he is always washing the feet of angels and men, and the whole universe. God is love; love lives to serve; love does not want to sit down in stately ease—sweet angel! She is only happy when she is busy and cumbered with many things.

#### SHELVING YOUNG MEN OF FIFTY

William Mathews handles the question of the ministerial dead line very vigorously in a late number of The Saturday Evening Post. This article, interesting alike to ministers and laymen, we quote almost in full.

We hear a great deal in these days about the dead line' in the ministerial calling. At fifty years of age, or even forty, a preacher is said to have reached this imaginary line, at which he is supposed to be superannuated, altho he should be, and commonly is, at the very flood tide of his power. Churches of all denominations want, therefore young pastors. If they are but newly fledged from their nests at Andover, Newton or Princeton so much the better. But can the student who graduated at a theological seminary one five or ten years ago possible have the learning, pastoral experience, knowledge of men,

wisdom, tact centeris paribus, which the gray-headed pastor has accumulated by thirty or forty years of study, sermonizing, trial and pastoral toil? Our "slow" forefathers, who lived before the days of steam and electric travel, telephones and short-cut courses of education, thought not. Of course, they knew well enough that there were exceptional men, a Jonathan Edwards, a Jeremy Taylor, a Nathaniel Emmons—as at a later day there were a Buckminster, a Channing, a Bushnell, a Summerfield, a Starr King—in whom genius could supply the place of years of study and experience. But, for the preacher of average natural gifts, they deemed these pre-requisite to success.

'Old' and 'young' are purely relative terms. It is not the gray hairs on a man's head, the crow's feet about his eyes or the wrinkles on his face that prove him old, but the lack of his force and fire, of elastic hope and faith, of mental and spiritual power.

When the pastor of the first Congregational church in Boston died, in 1663, the church resolved to supply his place by a young man, and accordingly elected Mr. Davenport, of New Haven, then seventy years old.

There are men of sixty and seventy, and even eighty years, who are brimming with enthusiasm and energy, and there are others but thirty years old who are bankrupt in both. 'The dead line,' which is supposed to threaten clergymen chiefly, exists as really in every other calling; but it is one which is fixed at no age, but is continually shifting, and is drawn, not by fate or providence, but by each man for himself. The preacher draws it when he is self satisfied; and stops growing mentally and spiritually; when he ceases to keep abreast with the thought, science and improved processes of his time. Chalmers, Robert Hall, Bushnell, Wayland, Edwards Park never reached the line in question. They did not, at any period of their lives, lay down their oars and float with the current. They continued to the last alive in every fibre and interested in every new advance of thought. Many of the liveliest, most energetic, and most receptive clergymen we know—men who keep all the windows of the mind open to new ideas—are past sixty.

Of course, there are languid, spiritless old men in the ministry, as in all other callings; but, in the great majority of cases, old age found them—it did not make them—such. If it was a preacher of this stamp whom a venerable father in Israel is said to have taken by the whiskers and warned: "You had better dye these, for if you leave your present charge, nobody will call you with such a badge of advanced life," the advice was not the sagest. It was his brains that needed dyeing, not his whiskers.

In line with this article it is worthy of note that the most popular preacher in London, Dr. Parker of the City Temple, is seventy-two years old. He has a gigantic physique and appears to be in perfect health. His voice does not show his age, he is heard perfectly in every part of the large auditorium.